

Bountiful Gifts

Every Thanksgiving I am personally grateful and appreciative for the good health of my family and friends and the many blessings we enjoy. As the Mayor of St. Marys, Thanksgiving is also a time to pause and reflect about those things for which I am grateful as a city leader.

I am thankful for our dedicated and hard working city employees who take their jobs as public servants so seriously. I am thankful for both elected and appointed city officials who work tirelessly on projects and tasks designed to make our great city even better.

I am thankful for volunteer committees and Council members who had the foresight to painstakingly create the city's Master Plan which has led to Phase 1 of the downtown re-vitalization project. I am appreciative that so many citizens have taken the time to call, write, email and stop me on the street to acknowledge how the downtown improvements are a welcome major step in enhancing the waterfront and will contribute towards increased economic development. I appreciate the patience and creativity of downtown businesses during the long construction period and am pleased they will now benefit from the beautification effort and the bioretention basins that will address the quality of storm water runoff from rainfall events. I am appreciative of the number of citizens who have expressed an understanding that stormwater mitigation is not the same as dealing with tidal flooding. I appreciate the patience of our boating and fishing community who have weathered with us the rain delays and parts delivery backlogs as we enter the final weeks of completing the improved and expanded Wheeler Street boat ramps. I have learned not to make promises I cannot control but continue to hope that the best Christmas present for them will be gliding their crafts into the water by Christmas time.

I am thankful that Hurricane Dorian blew out to sea; that Cumberland Island continues drawing people from around the world to its amazing location; that new businesses are sprouting up downtown, in midtown and on the west side; and that new restaurants are doing the same bringing a new generation of entrepreneurship. I am thankful that a new developer with first class ideas and credentials has made an offer on the former mill site and that the Kings Bay Naval Station continues to be a community anchor by investing heavily with dollars and personnel to meet the challenges of the next decades. I am thankful for our first class school system and our quality medical facilities that benefit so many residents.

Most of all I am thankful that I live and work in a city with so many warm and caring citizens and business owners who are happy to call St. Marys home. Whether they are life long residents, transplants, newcomers or military families

who are here for awhile, they each bring a sense of pride to our community with the desire to maintain our small town ambiance while insuring a strong and viable economy. We have many distinct neighborhoods but we are still "One St. Marys". We talk to our neighbors regardless of where they live. We extend a helping hand whenever anyone needs a lift. We face challenges with optimism and strike down adversity as we pull together in times of crisis. We are a community that cares.

On this Thanksgiving I am reminded of something I recently read that suggested "feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it." On this special day it is important for me to express my gratitude and appreciation to all those who work so diligently to make St. Marys all it can be.

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